

Welch, Horchbals

Pamphlet 204

DR. WELCH'S ADDRESS

TO THE

CANDIDATES

FOR

DEGREES AND LICENSES,

IN THE

MEDICAL INSTITUTION OF YALE COLLEGE,

JANUARY 17, 1844.

PRINTED BY E. L. HALEN.



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TO THE
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BY ARCHIBALD WELCH, M. D.

MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINATION.

NEW HAVEN:
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A D D R E S S .

THE Class which I am designated to address on the present occasion, occupies an interesting station. It is one of much interest to those who are older, and more experienced in the labors, the trials, the sorrows, and the joys of our profession ; and it is one in which you, gentlemen, and society at large, have much at stake.

After a long, laborious, and, I trust, profitable course of mental training, the time has at length arrived when your connection with this institution is about to be dissolved, and when you are about to enter into the more active scenes of life, and upon the discharge of high, responsible, and solemn duties. On such an occasion, a few words of caution, advice, and encouragement, may not be inappropriate ; and, though I could have wished that the duty of addressing them to you might have been committed to abler hands, I shall suggest to you a few brief remarks, hastily thrown together, in the short intervals which have been allowed me, while engaged in the discharge of those duties, with the distracting nature of which, you will individually, sooner or later, become acquainted. It will not be expected that I shall pronounce an eulogium upon the profession which you have chosen ; nor, that I shall enter into a discussion of principles and disputed points, or an investigation of the soundness or unsoundness of the various theories which have been adopted at different periods ; but, on the other

hand, it may be expected that I shall submit a few remarks of a *practical character*.

And here permit me to observe, in the first place, that most, if not all of you, will find hereafter, as the result of observation and experience both, that your former views of professional life were far from being correct ones; that you have looked at many matters connected with the profession through a false medium; and that the world, which you have so often contemplated in your youthful days, and dressed in all the beauty, and clothed in all the charms, which a young, active, and ardent imagination could suggest, is a very different world from the one in which you are destined to "live, and move, and have your being." Since this earth became a place of trial, (and such for the wisest and the best of reasons it has ever been and ever will be,) whenever the bright anticipations of the young have been fully realized, or their brilliant promises fulfilled, uncertainty has always hung over the future of all who yet have lived, and disappointment will, in many important matters, and in regard to the most dearly cherished plans of worldly enterprise, be the lot of all who shall succeed us, until the death of the last man who is yet to live. Looking hitherto at the world, or rather at man, to a great extent through a false or illusive medium, in the innocence of your youthful hearts, you have considered him rather as the creature that he should be, than the one which he really is, and which your later, more matured, and almost uniform experience will prove him to be. Young, unpracticed, and untaught in the thousand varied arts by which man deceives and betrays his fellow man, you have yet to learn, that he may "look like the beautiful rose, and still be the serpent beneath it;" and some of you, in your own bitter experience may be left to feel, that he "can smile, and smile, and be a villain." You have, hitherto, taking your own warm hearts as the standard, perhaps,

supposed that the hearts of others were as warm and as sincere as yours. Your own generous feelings, you have hoped, and possibly may have believed, were but a type of the generous, open feelings around you. In the overflow of that charity "which hopeth all things," and which is one of the brightest ornaments in the character of youth, you have not been willing to believe that a cold, calculating, selfish principle of action, was the ruling principle in the hearts of thousands upon thousands, if not of a vast majority of mankind. But unless your own future experience is to be wholly unlike that of *all* who have gone before you, you will hereafter form a very different estimate of men from the one you have already formed. You will learn that external appearance does not always reflect the true image of "the hidden man of the heart." You will see abundant proofs daily rising up around you, until they grow to a countless number, that in this unfeeling, icy world, integrity is accounted of little worth, talents are not duly appreciated, and merit is sadly disregarded. Had the penalty of the fall of man been only sorrow, disease, and death, and the physical man *alone* been contaminated, our profession would have been practically divested of many of its ills. Diseases would even then have fastened upon the fairest of the fair; and the great destroyer would have gone on, gathering in countless numbers his fated victims, until the death of the last man announced that his commission had expired, and his work was done. But still your labor, and that of all our profession would have been comparatively light. True, we should have been obliged to study with great care into the nature and symptoms of disease in all its Protean shapes; an intimate acquaintance with the physical structure of man would have been no less important to the physician than it now is. The qualified, faithful, philanthropic practitioner would, even then, have felt no less anxiety in regard to the result

than he now feels; and when, after putting forth all his well-directed efforts, and exerting all his skill, he saw that all was vain—that the object of his care must sink, under the wasting power of disease, he would have felt no less sympathy with the anxious group who encircled the bed of death, and were anxiously watching the beating of the last pulse; but when death had set his pale seal upon the lips of his patient, he would have not only the consolation attendant upon the conviction that he had done his duty, but, in addition to this, the cheering assurance that justice would be done both to his motives and his conduct; that no misrepresentations would be made of either, and that no tongue of malice or of envy would whisper the slanderous insinuation that his ignorance of the nature of the disease had prevented a resort to the appropriate remedies, or that his negligence in the treatment of his patient had hastened his dissolution. These remarks are not made with an intention to alarm or to discourage you, as you are about entering upon the duties of a profession both necessary and honorable. The trials to which you are to be exposed, trials from which no physician ever was or ever will be exempt, will often meet you; and you need no prophet's view to warn you of their approach. It is that, though they may come unbidden, they may not come unexpected, that I say to you, they cannot be avoided—it is to arm you against them, when they shall come, that I warn you of their approach.

To the young and inexperienced the world only shows its *fairest side*, and this too in most cases adorned by the brightest colors; but the experience of even the most highly favored has proved to them, that this is a world of disappointment, and often of severe trial. As trials must come, and evils must surround us, it is the part of true wisdom to be prepared for their approach; that thus the keen edge of suffering may be taken off. To the practical man, who en-

deavors to obtain a knowledge of the world, and by looking at it, as it in truth is, as a stage on which much is to be done, and much to be endured, the varied ills of life lose much of their power to disappoint and to annoy : and to you, gentlemen, it is of no little importance, at the very entrance of your professional career, to form, so far as may be, a just estimate of men and things. It will enable you, by the exercise of a prudent foresight, to avoid many of the evils to which you will be exposed ; and to bear in the true spirit, those which you may not be able to avert. You have chosen a profession which is full of responsibilities, of no ordinary kind. It is one also, which, if entered upon with a *just sense* of your responsibilities, and a firm purpose of doing your duty, and your *whole duty*, opens before you a wide, and almost illimitable field of usefulness to your fellow men.

To cultivate this field, either with credit to yourselves, or to the benefit of your fellow men, you must cultivate a lively, an abiding sense of your own personal and relative duties, and of the important trusts which are to be committed to your charge. And here, suffer me to say to you, in all kindness, however respectable may be your standing as scholars, however much, in the short period of your pupilage, you may have acquired from books ; however deeply you may have drank at these fountains of wisdom, which the fathers in our profession have opened, still you are only beginners ; you have only mastered the elements of professional science ; you have only set your feet upon the very borders of a broad field of learning which lies spread out before you.

It is a great mistake, and by far too common, to suppose that study—close, deep, laborious study—is not essential to success in any, and every profession ; and it requires neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, to predict with perfect accuracy, the fate of that young man, who rests satisfied with present attainments, and does not make it the great rule

of life, that every day shall in some way be instrumental in increasing his stock of professional knowledge. He may indeed, by a pleasing address, by artifice and misrepresentation, or by a bold and dashing impudence, flourish for a time, and secure a brief and evanescent popularity; but he never will, he never can, in this way, lay the foundation for a good reputation, or permanent success. Genius may do much at first, but unaided by severe, patient, and untiring industry, it is but a poor heritage to its possessor; and like an *ignis fatuus*, will, in all probability, lead its deluded follower into inextricable difficulties. The importance of study, in connection with professional reputation and success, is too little regarded; and especially in this advanced period in the history of professional science, it is a great error in any young man, however commanding may be his talents, to suppose that he can rise above mediocrity without a thorough cultivation of his intellectual powers. The general principles of our profession, results as they are of the study, experience and wisdom of successive generations, are to a great extent settled upon so firm a basis, that they are in very little danger of being overthrown, or materially disturbed, by the dreamy speculations, or visionary theories of modern pretenders. Every year is adding to the great amount of learning connected with our profession. Every year opens some new mine, which he who courts distinction in his profession, either for his own sake, or as the means of relieving the distresses of his fellow men, must wish to explore. It is idle to pretend, that there are not, at this day, sources of information, and valuable ones too, to the examination of which the busiest and most industrious life is hardly equal—and without a familiar acquaintance with which, one of our profession cannot reasonably hope to secure the confidence, and command the respect of his fellow men. A knowledge of diseases and their remedies, or an acquaintance with the

writings of those who have been distinguished in the various departments of our profession, never has been, and never will be attained by intuition ; nor can it be the work of a month or a year—it is the labor of a life ; and he who hopes to obtain it by any *short hand* process, will find in the end, and to his great disappointment, that he has “leaned on Egypt.” The last half century has produced a great change in the medical profession—it has opened new sources of instruction, of the most valuable character, and elevated medical science to a high and dignified position. I would not be understood to intend even the slightest reproach to our professional brethren of former days. Among them were many, very many, men of strong minds, and of commanding talents ; men who have shed a rich lustre upon the profession to which we belong, and who have left the results of their honest, industrious, and persevering labors, a rich legacy to us, and to the world. I take nothing, however, from their well earned fame, I assert nothing to which, if living, I should not have their full assent, when I say, that more is expected, indeed, that more is *necessary*, to constitute a thoroughly educated medical practitioner, than in former years. To the credit of the age it may be said, more liberal views are entertained, in regard to a medical education, and a thorough qualification for professional respectability and usefulness, than our worthy ancestors were accustomed to cherish. It is now a common sentiment, that, while great pains are taken to secure the services of men of talents and learning in the ministry, and those of the ablest, most experienced, and skillful in the legal profession, it is unwise to intrust health, and even life, to the guardianship of quacks.

It is admitted, that there are some exceptions, and that many will be charmed with the boasting of the charlatan, and thoughtlessly trust their lives in the hands of the empiric, whose appropriate employment was but yesterday in the

shop or the field ; yet the intelligent and discerning portion of the community, will appreciate and patronize the educated physician. Although diseases are no more dreaded, and death no more studiously and anxiously sought to be avoided, than in former days, yet the curing of the former, and the warding off of the latter, are works which almost every one now wishes to intrust to skillful hands, and well instructed heads. I have not time to institute a comparison between the advantages for a thorough and systematic education, which the present enlightened age affords, and those more limited ones which but a few years since were afforded to the medical student.

These halls of science, which the enterprise and zeal, and noble spirits of the friends of science and of men, and the liberality of the state, have opened within a few years to the young aspirant for professional distinction, direct your eyes at once to the wide difference between the present and the past. The professorships which have been formed, and are now, as ever, so ably filled ; the lectures which are here delivered in the various departments of the profession, with the perfect illustrations by which they are accompanied, are so many precious legacies, bequeathed to you by those who have gone, or are rapidly going off the stage of human life. They are so many evidences of the high estimate, which their founders and an enlightened public have put upon our profession. In the strongest terms, they say to the young man, about entering on his professional career, "The spirit of the age in which you live demands of you, that you become thoroughly instructed in the great principles of your profession. Public opinion requires it."

Those present who are personally interested in the prosperity of this institution, the honors of which you are now to receive, will excuse me, if I express my firm conviction, founded upon some observation, that no similar institution in

the country affords more ample and abundant facilities for imparting instruction than this.

The anatomical museum and cabinet of *materia medica* are of the first order. The laboratory is richly stored with every necessary apparatus for illustrations in that highly interesting and useful department of science, so ably taught by the professor of chemistry and pharmacy; and notwithstanding the institution sustained a great loss, and its friends were deeply pained, in the death of the lamented Smith and Hubbard, whose memories will be long cherished, their contemporaries and successor have been eminently successful in sustaining and increasing the reputation of the institution; and if as persevering efforts were made to "herald" its merits, as have been put forth in behalf of some other institutions, it would receive but its just share of reputation. And may I not add, that it is incumbent upon you to go forth in your several professional employments, not only for the benevolent purpose of relieving the sufferings of your fellow men, but also unhesitatingly pointing to this, as the source from which you derived your qualifications.

It will be but a reasonable expectation of your employers, that you will be thoroughly qualified for every *emergency*, both in the practice of medicine and surgery; and if for this purpose you rely upon your course of preparatory studies which you have now completed, painful disappointment will be the experience of many of your employers, and extreme regret your own. It will be indispensable, that you devote your time carefully to the study, both of general practice, and to particular diseases. Your *anatomical* studies should be frequently reviewed, that you may always be prepared to attend to any case of *surgery* to which you may be unexpectedly called. Although I would advise that the important, rare, and difficult operations which may be performed at leisure, should be committed to experienced and skillful

hands, yet I would urge, that every young gentleman who is admitted into the medical profession, should be, and feel himself thoroughly qualified to perform any ordinary surgical operation ; and if, through the want of that knowledge which is within your reach, and which would enable you successfully to combat disease, and wield the knife, you shall fail to save the life of a fellow mortal, you may avoid the sentence which public sentiment might justly give you, but remember, that you cannot avoid standing condemned at the tribunal of your own consciences.

Your professional reputation, now and henceforth to be entrusted to your own keeping, is to rise or fall, very much in proportion to the manner in which you cultivate or neglect your minds, to the manner in which you improve or misimprove your time and opportunities. Let me assure you, that nothing short of untiring industry can make you masters of any science—nothing short of this can give you an elevated standing in our profession. By industry, I do not intend to recommend to you that every leisure hour, every spare interval between the active duties of your profession, should be devoted to books. A man may read until, should time allow, and strength and life endure, his mind has become a vast storehouse of learning ; until, in short, he can say that he has read all that has been written on any given subject, and still, to all valuable purposes, be a novice in the end. The effect of “all work and no play,” is too well understood to require comment ; and all study and no reflection may make a learned man, but can never make one practically useful. The digestive organs are no less important to the intellectual, than to the physical constitution ; and just as true as the derangement of the functions of these organs produces languor, debility, and disease, in the latter case, just so true it is, that intellectual lassitude and debility will characterize the man, who does not thoroughly

digest, arrange, and methodize, in his own mind, what he derives from the minds and thoughts of others. Reading, alone, is not study, and can never fit a man for the arduous duties of our profession. To do this, reading, reflection, and comparison, are indispensably necessary; and without reflection and comparison, a man of the most extensive reading is at best but a walking library, without even a catalogue to denote its contents. You have, in addition to those of the present day, books connected with the various departments of medical science, the labors of successive ages and many generations, of the most learned and the ablest men—but, while they have transmitted to you the almost priceless results of their patient investigations, deep researches, and untiring labors, they will be of little use unless you think as well as read. A proper combination of the two in due proportions has never failed, and never will fail, of making a practically useful man; and without a due combination, little of good can be anticipated.

But you have other duties to perform besides that of study and reflection; and these are so many and so various, that they can hardly be embraced in the narrow compass of a brief address. To one duty of no small importance, I briefly direct your attention—I allude to a systematic punctuality in meeting your appointments. It is not to be expected, nay, it is not possible, that a physician should meet every engagement precisely at the time appointed; but a little attention to the arrangement of his business, methodically, and according to a system, will in most cases enable him to meet his arrangements at the appointed hour; and a strict adherence to this rule, except in extreme cases, and when prevented by unforeseen and unavoidable hindrances, will prove of great benefit, in the whole course of your lives. System is the life and soul of business; and the man who acts on systematic plans, can accomplish vastly more, and

with much greater facility, than he who has no fixed rules by which to regulate his time and labor. It is said of an eminent physician,* in one of our most populous, commercial cities, one who stood at the head of his profession, that his mode of doing business was so perfectly systematic, and every professional duty was so arranged, that he never found it necessary to be absent from public worship on the Sabbath, except when called to visit a patient in an urgent case, who was not on his list on the morning of that sacred day. A physician who has no systematic plan of dividing his time and attending to his duties, will always be in a hurry, and accomplish but a small amount of business. Our employers expect, and have a right to require of us, punctuality of the strictest character, in the discharge of our duties; and the probabilities are very strong, that he who once fixes the habit of neglecting his appointments, and consulting his own convenience rather than the feelings and wishes of his employers, will find in the end, and at no very distant day, that the sum total of service required at his hands, will impose no very heavy tax, either upon his time or his talents.

It will not only be necessary, as before remarked, that you apply yourselves diligently to the study of your profession generally; but it is highly important that *diagnosis* and *pathology* should receive a large share of your attention, and that you should not content yourselves with prescribing for the *name* of a disease, technically recorded in the books. You will then avoid that stereotyped practice which so peculiarly characterizes the work of the quack. Let *theories* and *systems* have their due influence, but remember that well attested *facts*, sustained by careful *observation* and *experience*, are infinitely more important. The Brunonian

* The late Dr. Warren, of Boston.

views have been productive of some good, and also of a vast amount of evil.

Be cautious how you adopt the false doctrine of some, that every form of disease is *entonic*, or of others, that every variety is *atonic*; the first, requiring the full exercise of your ingenuity in the use of *antiphlogistic* remedies, and the last, of *tonics* and *stimulants*.

In all your intercourse with men, and especially with your medical brethren, courtesy, and a kind regard to the feelings of others, should govern your conduct. Every rank, both above and below you, should receive that amount of attention and respect, which their condition and talents may demand. In the capacity of consulting physician, avoid that low selfishness which sometimes prompts to an exhibition of opinions to the patient and attendants, from sinister motives; and remember, that if the attending physician is worthy of the confidence of his employers, the business of the consultation is entirely between yourselves and him. Whatever acuteness of discrimination you may possess, in detecting *signs* and *symptoms* of disease, which a less critical or more superficial observer might fail to discover, it is highly important that such a careful examination should be made, that the patient will feel entire confidence in your investigation. On the other hand, an excessive display of feeling, exhibited by a needless solicitude, and protracted, inexcusable examination of cases, for mere effect, should be avoided as one of those weak traits, sometimes possessed, but never concealed, by our brethren. Avoid all *artifice* and *fraud* in your professional conduct. It is as true now as it was in the first century, that "whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." If in our profession, the unprincipled aspirant for notoriety sows reports of cases never seen, of operations never performed, of successful treatment of diseases which have never fallen under his observation, he will

reap the contempt of every honorable member of the profession. If you endeavor to make the impression upon the community, by other means than by the exhibition of merit, that you possess superior skill in any special department of the profession, or that others have not had access to the sources from which you derived your knowledge, you will reap the cold neglect of honest physicians.

If, in your visits of consultation, you represent that you were "called just in time to save life," that "another hour would have been too late," and that you have effected "a change of treatment," when it is in appearance only, be assured, you will reap a large harvest of disrespect from your professional brother, who will thereafter treat you with becoming indifference.

Clandestine practice, whatever the motive may be for its adoption, should never be tolerated. Much of the prejudice which has accumulated against our profession, has originated in a misjudged effort to effect the removal of disease, by the secret administration of some active remedy, to which there may be private or popular objections. In all cases where a patient is known to entertain any unreasonable prejudice against certain articles of medicine, and those prejudices are not well founded, it will be your duty to render the subject intelligible, (and this can always be done in our profession, with intelligent patients,) and to apply the remedies, with a full understanding on the part of the patient of their nature and effects. If, under these circumstances, there shall be a refusal to comply with your directions, it will be your duty to abandon the remedy, although it may be the only one on which you may rely, for you will not be at liberty to sacrifice truth, to save the life of the most eminently useful individual on earth.

Among the many points to be attended to in the discharge of duty to your patients, that of giving *written* and *intelli-*

gible directions for the administration of medicine and diet, is of no small importance ; an omission of this part of duty, has sometimes led to ludicrous, if not to disastrous consequences, as evinced in a prescription of "*leeches* for the *stomach*," which were employed in a manner not the most congenial with a fastidious taste ; and in another case, where the patient, who was directed to take his medicine in any "convenient vehicle," not comprehending the full import of his instructions, was found by his physician quietly seated in a *wheelbarrow*, as being in his estimation the most convenient of all *vehicles*.

In these days of popular excitement, it may not be amiss to warn you against entering the lists as *political* champions, or embarking in the party controversies which so eminently mark the age in which you live. It is the duty of every educated man, to whatever profession he may belong, to be familiar with the great and cardinal principles of human government, and with the fundamental principles and doctrines of the Constitution. In common with all others, it is your privilege, and your duty no less than your privilege, to examine critically and seriously into the principles of the conflicting political parties, wherever such parties exist, and to adopt such a course as in the exercise of an *enlightened conscience* and an *honest judgment*, will best promote the public good. This an honest man always will do, when not given over to the uncontrolled dominion of party spirit ; and this an honest man always can do, without forfeiting the confidence or friendship of his employers.

In doing this, avoid becoming partisans. Neither duty to yourselves, your patrons, or your country, requires that you should leave the laudable and quiet pursuits of your profession, to engage in the bitter political conflicts of the present day. The political maneuvering of the age in which we live is a trade, not to be learned or skillfully practiced,

while engaged in the pursuits of the benevolent profession into which you have entered. Avoid it, notwithstanding those who are personally interested may occasionally withdraw their patronage, move the tongue of slander, and raise the hand of persecution against you. Bear it meekly; you will have the approbation of the best portion of the community and of your consciences.

It has been truly said, "the praise of honest men, and the abuse of rogues, both aid in the attainment of prosperity in the world." Endeavor by all honorable means to merit the first; and if you avoid the sectarian strifes and political intrigues of the present day, and discharge all *professional* and *moral* obligations in accordance with the dictates of your enlightened consciences, you will have your full share of the last.

A poet whose name will never be forgotten has said, "an undevout astronomer is mad;" and if a contemplation of the wonderful works of nature be calculated to fasten upon the mind an abiding conviction of a great First Cause, and lead the soul to an intimate and hallowed communion with the divine Author of all existence, whether animate or inanimate, it would seem impossible that such a being should exist as an undevout physician. Your studies lead you to an intimate acquaintance with *man*, the crowning work of the Almighty, so "fearfully and wonderfully made;" and if to that knowledge, which few except those of our profession are privileged to acquire, of this curious, complicated, wonderful exhibition of power and wisdom, you add the ten thousand other proofs of the agency of a great First Cause—of the wisdom, power, and benevolence which are stamped on all his works, it would seem that skepticism could find no place in your minds. With all the light which is so abundantly shed around you, I will not so far degrade your understandings as to indulge a fear on this subject. It will

become you, gentlemen, to cultivate in your own minds a firm belief in the doctrines of the Bible, and by all means encourage and strengthen the hopes of those, who, in the hours of physical sufferings, are sustained by the truths of those doctrines. The time has been, when skepticism, and a denial of the truths of revelation, were considered as evidences of superior discrimination, and when many misguided members of our profession advocated the doctrines of Voltaire and Hume. Those days are past ; and a careful study of the truths of the Gospel and of science, and of the adaptation of the organs and functions of the body, to sustain the immortal part, will at all times strengthen your faith ; for science and philosophy are in strict accordance with the principles of the Christian religion.

You will find this, as all others have found it, a world of trial ; and in many instances, unless more highly favored of Heaven than the rest of mankind, clouds will thicken around your heads ; thorns and briers will grow up in your path ; and you will sometimes experience that desolation of spirit and sickness of the heart, which friends cannot heal, and for which earth has no remedy ; at such times you will deeply feel the necessity of a friend and comforter. To such a friend and such a comforter, religion directs your attention. It offers you support under severe trials ; rich and abiding consolations in the deepest afflictions, and light in the darkest hours ; and promises you at last a home in a heaven of unending joy.

The skeptic may sneer, and the heartless infidel may scoff at the Christian religion ; represent it as a gloomy thing, and its humble advocates and professors as the votaries of a sickly and superstitious delusion ; but sooner or later they will discover their folly, and deplore their suicidal madness. To each one of you, I say, in a spirit of much kindness, and with a sincere desire for your present and future peace, Make the

Bible the unerring rule of your faith and practice ; cultivate a thorough and familiar acquaintance with its doctrines, its principles, its precepts, and its promises. Cherish an habitual reverence for every thing connected with religion, and by all means make it a personal and practical concern.

It is generally admitted as a truth, that when the competent and faithful physician has acquired the merited confidence to which he is entitled, it is often in his power to exert an influence which few others can command. In your professional visits, you will be favored with that familiar intercourse which few except physicians are permitted to enjoy. There is much in the relation which exists between us and our employers, directly and happily calculated to promote familiarity, to inspire confidence, and to cement the ties of friendship between the respective parties. In the ingenuousness of the heart, we are often made the repositories of matters which are strictly of a personal or family character, and which never would be confided to the keeping of any other.

In regard to any thing of this description, allow me to remark that your *honor is pledged to an inviolable secrecy* ; and, on all subjects with which we are made acquainted, either from the necessities of the relation which we bear to our employers, or from the friendship and confidence which may grow out of that relation, our lips should be hermetically sealed. That man is a disgrace to his profession, and guilty of the blackest treason, who can betray his trust in this particular. I have no fears, gentlemen, that you will ever sport with the feelings of your friends, or with your own honor, at the hazard of your professional characters.

Should you acquire the confidence of which I have spoken, (and this you will do if faithful to yourselves and to society,) you will, I trust, be disposed to turn it to a better account. It will be often in your power to be the favored

instruments of Heaven in producing great and lasting good, and precious as the interests of a deathless spirit. Surrounded by gay companions, absorbed in the affairs of the busy world, perplexed by its cares, and led away by its fascinations, a man may succeed in banishing serious considerations from his mind; and though it be true that "men may live fools," it is no less true, that "fools they cannot die." The chamber of disease, and the bed of death, are places of deep and solemn interest; and however indifferent and careless men may be in days of health and seasons of prosperity, however ready they may be to promise themselves that "to-morrow shall be as this day, and more abundant," this false assurance, this vain boasting, cannot last forever; I had almost said, it cannot find a place for the sole of its foot in the chamber of sickness. Here the false glow of pleasure fades away; here the delusive charms of this world are stripped of their fascinations, and the realities of the other assume some portion at least of their importance. By the bed of sickness, serious considerations will come, though they come unbidden and unwelcome guests; and the victims of wasting disease, as well as anxious friends, will here be very apt to hold communion with their own spirits, and to reflect with some interest upon their future destiny; here the proud spirit will be very apt to be subdued, and the heart begin to soften; and the physician will often, in his professional intercourse, find overwhelming proof that "a death-bed is a detector of the heart." What golden opportunities for doing good will be afforded to that physician who can estimate the value of another's soul, from having felt the value and danger of his own. What a favorable opportunity will be often afforded him to administer to the sick and afflicted the consolations of religion; and let me urge you, gentlemen, to neglect no opportunities of doing good—let the whole tenor of your lives be in favor of the truth. And

when you leave, as you are now about to do, these halls of science, and exchange them for the active scenes and high responsibilities of professional life, and for the trials and labors which await you, may you go out with the blessing of Heaven resting on your heads; wherever the unseen hand of Providence may direct your steps, may the same hand guide you in the paths of peace, of usefulness and duty, and crown your labors with success. And when, after the few short years allotted you on earth, the last survivor of your Class shall be numbered with the dead and gathered to his fathers, may it then be found, that every individual, by a timely application to the great Physician, has been healed of his moral maladies; and may you all meet in a world where all tears shall be wiped from every eye, and sickness and death be known no more forever.





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